

**Phase IB Archaeological Monitoring as part of the Reconstruction  
of Sankofa Park, Brooklyn, Kings County, New York  
(Formerly Schenck Playground, Livonia Avenue Between Schenck  
Avenue and Barbey Street)  
(PIN #: 84624B000X01/NY SHPO: 22PR01944)**



*Prepared for*

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation  
City of New York – Landmarks Preservation Commission  
New York State Museum  
City of New York – Department of Parks and Recreation

*Prepared by*

Alyssa Loorya, Ph.D., RPA, Principal Investigator  
Rosita Tirado, B.A., R.P., Field Director

*Edited by*

Christopher Ricciardi, Ph.D. RPA

26 November 2024

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY TABLE

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New York SHPO Project Review Number:	22PR01944
Involved City/State/Federal Agencies:	City of New York – Department of Parks and Recreation City of New York – Landmarks Preservation Commission New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation New York State Museum
Phase of Survey:	Phase IB (Monitoring)
Location Information:	816 Livonia Avenue between Schenck Avenue and Barbey Street, Brooklyn, Kings County, New York
Survey Area:	less than one half acre
USGS 7.5 Quad Map:	Brooklyn
Archaeological Survey Overview:	Fragmented/disarticulated human remains were recovered throughout the project area. No in situ and/or burial trenches/locations were observed
Sensitivity Assessment:	Site retains a moderate to high potential for the recovery of disarticulated human remains from mixed/disturbed contexts
Results of Architectural Survey:	N/A
Buildings within Project Area:	0
Buildings adjacent to Project Area:	0
Previous N/R Buildings:	0
Eligible N/R Buildings:	0
Report Authors:	Alyssa Loorya, Ph.D., R.P.A. and Rosita Tirado
Report Editors:	Christopher Ricciardi, Ph.D., R.P.A
Date:	November 2024

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

On behalf of the City of New York – Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks), Chrysalis Archaeological Consultants, Inc. (Chrysalis) was contracted to undertake Phase IB Archaeological Monitoring of the excavations as part of the Reconstruction of Sankofa Park, the former Schenck Playground, Livonia Avenue between Schenck Avenue and Barbary Street, Brooklyn, Kings County, New York (Block 4090, Lot 6) (Maps 1 and 2).

NYC Parks determined the Area of Potential Effect (APE), as outlined in the Archaeological Work Plan (AWP), developed by Hartgen Archaeological Associates and the NYC Parks, and coordinated with the City of New York – Landmarks Preservation Commission (NYC LPC) in April 2023 (Map 3 and Appendix A) to be specific areas where construction excavation activities would be undertaken. The APE did not cover the entire project area, but specific portions within the current boundaries of the playground.

The purpose of Phase IB Archaeological Monitoring was to determine whether the project area contained human remains and/or cultural resources associated with the previous site's usage, as part of the seventeenth to eighteenth century Dutch Reformed Church, school house and cemetery, an African-American cemetery in the nineteenth century, a school house in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and finally, as a public park since the mid twentieth century. The project recovered over 500 fragmented human skeletal elements from multiple disturbed contexts.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The existing site condition at the start of this project was open space with several recreational facilities including, but not limited to, benches, seating, gaming tables, ball courts (hand and basketball), children's play area, drinking fountains, comfort station and various plantings.

The project provides a complete reconstruction of the park. This includes, but is not limited to, the installation of play equipment, safety surface, paving, fencing, seating, water, electric and drainage improvements as well as ornamental planting beds. Work also includes an historical commemoration within the park to recognize and honor those buried at the site. The memorial will provide the community with a commemorative space to recognize and honor those buried at the site. All the work will improve accessibility, upgrade infrastructure and bring the park into compliance with safety guidelines (NYC Parks 2024).

### **PROJECT INFORMATION**

For clarity, throughout this document the Project Delivery Team (PDT) refers to NYC Parks and Chrysalis. The term Regulatory Agencies refers to the various agencies involved in the project including the NYC LPC, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NY SHPO), the City of New York – Department of Health and the City of New York (NYC DOH), the City of New York – Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (NYC OME) and the New York State Museum (NYSM). The PDT kept the Regulatory Agencies informed of on-going field work via email throughout this project.

Project Name	The Reconstruction of Sankofa Park, Brooklyn, Kings County, New York
Street Address	816 Livonia Avenue Street, Brooklyn, New York
Borough/Block/Lot	Brooklyn, Block 4090, Lot 6
Applicant Name	NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
Lead Agency	NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
Principal Investigator	Alyssa Loorya, Ph.D. R.P.A., Chrysalis Archaeology

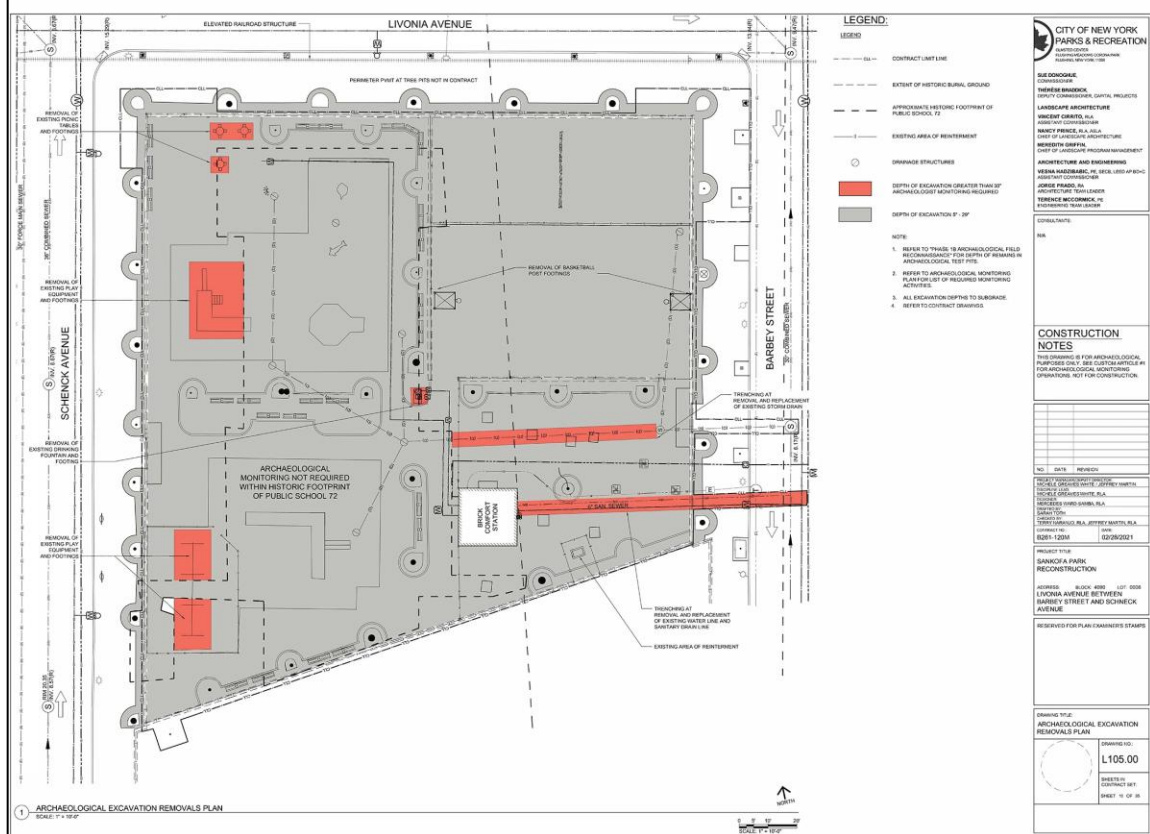
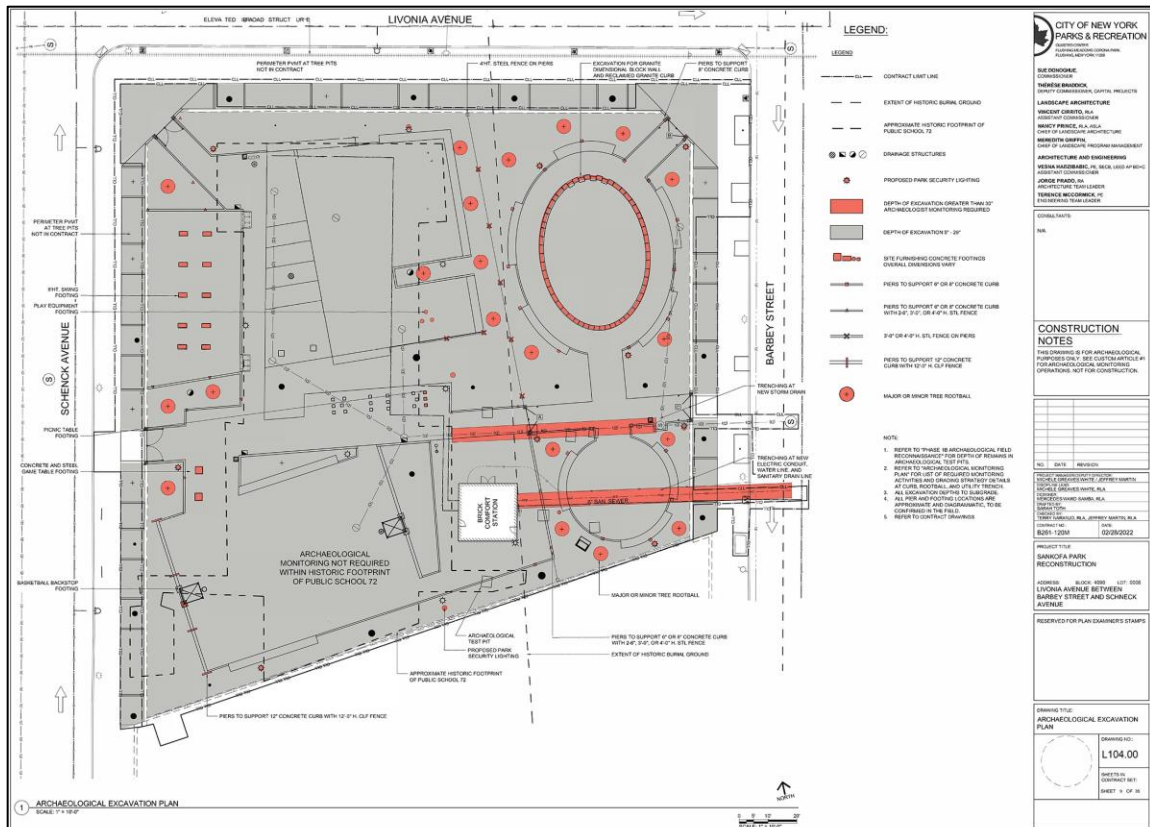


Map 1: USGS Brooklyn, NY Quadrangle (United States Geological Survey 2023).



Map 2: Project Area (Google Earth 2024).





Map 3: Project defined archaeological monitoring areas pre-construction (Parks 2023).

## **CULTURAL RESOURCE REGULATIONS**

Archaeological work was conducted in accordance with NYC LPC Guidelines for Archaeological Work in New York City (NYC LPC 2018) (NYC Archaeological Guidelines), NY SHPO's Guidelines for Archaeological Projects, and in compliance with the New York State Unmarked Burial Site Protection Act (Bill: 630-A (Cal. No. 447), May 2, 2023) and NYC DOH.

In addition, the project followed the general guidelines of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) define, under 'Section 106 Regulations', that using federal funds must consider the effects of their actions on any properties listed, or determined eligible for listing, on the National Register for Historic Places (NR) (36 CFR 800). The investigation will also be conducted pursuant to the New York Archaeological Council (NYAC) guidelines for such projects (NYAC 1994; 2000; 2002). Likewise, the State Historic Preservation Act (SHPA) and the (New York) City Environmental Quality Review Act (CEQRA) require that agencies must consider the effects of their actions on any properties listed, or determined eligible for listing, on the State and City Register for Historic Places.

Chrysalis' staff, who were associated with this project, satisfied and exceed the qualifications specified in by the above referenced New York State and City archaeological guidelines and all federal regulations presented in 36 CFR 61, Appendix A.

## **II. RESEARCH DESIGN AND CONTEXT**

Phase IB fieldwork is designed to ascertain the presence or absence of archaeological resources within a site. Although the general goal is to determine whether significant (i.e. National Register [NR] eligible) resources that could be adversely affected by project work are extant within the APE, in the case of this former church/school/cemetery site, the goal was to document, remove and rebury any human remain that was uncovered during construction activities, be it from *in situ* or disturbed contexts.

The project APE was determined to have high sensitivity for buried human remains, as this site was the old Dutch Reformed Church cemetery from ca. 1680 into the nineteenth century. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century the cemetery boundaries were being encroached upon. A significant project area property was developed with the construction of Public School 72 in 1886. In 1924, the school expanded incorporating the easternmost portion of the project area. Following demolition of the school in 1954 NYC Parks constructed a playground on the northern half of the project area. A library was constructed on the southern half (Hartgen 2016). Archaeological testing by Hartgen (2018) documented the presence of fragmented human skeletal remains.

NYC Parks, in consultation with NYC LPC, determined that the material remains recovered would not be subject to analysis, but rather would only be dry brushed, counted and immediately reburied upon the completion of the excavation portion of the current project. This reinterment was concurred with by the NYC DOH, and the project obtained the necessary Permit for the action (DS-2024-025). On Tuesday, October 29, 2024, all human remains recovered from the concurrent project were reinterred on site after coordination with all the relevant Regulatory Agencies

associated with the project occurred (NY SHPO, NYC LPC, NYC DOH, NYC OME and the NYSM).

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Western Long Island was formed by glacial outwash during the Wisconsin ice age, which resulted in a series of creeks and marshland (Schuberth 1968). As such, Long Island comprises two spines of glacial moraine, with a large, sandy outwash plain beyond. These moraines consist of gravel and loose rock left behind during the Wisconsin glaciation's two most recent pulses 21,000 years ago. The northern moraine, which directly abuts the North Shore of Long Island at points, is known as the Harbor Hill moraine. The more southerly moraine, known as the Ronkonkoma moraine, forms the “backbone” of Long Island running primarily through the center of Long Island (Schuberth 1968; Eisenberg 1978).

## PREVIOUS REPORT SUMMARY

There have been several CRM projects undertaken in, and around, the general project area (Table 01). Reports by Technical Preservation Services, Inc. (1986) and Greenhouse Consultants (2008) focused more on the nearby Christian Duryea House, a formerly standing Dutch-American farmhouse. Hartgen’s work in 2016 led to the development of the current project and the AWP.

One potential Native American shell midden is identified on the New York State Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS), which is maintained by NY SHPO. This site was identified in the early twentieth century, via Parker 1922 and has no additional information/details (Hartgen 2016).

There is one National Register/NYC LPC designated properties, the project area itself, and two potential additional city registered sites within/adjacent to the project area, including the Public Library building and the Jerome-Livonia Signal Tower location (Hartgen 2016).

Table 1: Previous Reports relevant to Sankofa Park.

DATE	REPORT TITLE	AUTHOR
1986	Detailed Phase IA report of the Duryea House site both near Barbey Street and its relocated site on Jerome Street.	Technical Preservation Services, Inc.
2008a	Phase IA for a lot bounded by Barbey Street and New Lots Avenue	Greenhouse Consultants
2008b	Phase IB testing for a lot bounded by Barbey Street and New Lots Avenue	Greenhouse Consultants
2016	Phase IA Archaeological Literature Review and Fieldwork Plan – Schenck Playground, African Burial Ground Square, Block 4090, Lot 6, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation	Hartgen Archaeological Associates, Inc.



DATE	REPORT TITLE	AUTHOR
2018	Phase IB Archaeological Field Reconnaissance, Schenck Playground, African Burial Ground Square, Block 4090, Lot 6, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, 816 Livonia Avenue, Schenck Avenue and Barbey Street, Brooklyn (New Lots), Kings County, New York - HAA # 5003-21. Report on field with the City of New York – Landmarks Preservation Commission. New York, New York.	Hartgen Archaeological Associates, Inc.
2023	Archaeological Work Plan for Sankofa Park, Brooklyn, New York	Hartgen Archaeological Associates, Inc.

## PREHISTORIC PERIOD SENSITIVITY

In general, the area that encompasses the current project location was occupied by members of the Canarsie Native American group, since the Late Woodland Period. Little evidence, in terms of physical remains, and overall cultural history, remains from the Native American period, due, in part, to the eradication of the Native American tribes from the region beginning in the 1640s and the various European settlements of the area. In generally, Native American groups of the area lived in small villages either along the coastline or near the many streams and inlets to the Jamaica Bay. By the mid to late seventeenth century, there appears to be little remains of Native Americans in the area (Grumet 1995 and Hartgen 2018).

For a more detailed project area history please refer to the Phase IA Documentary History and Archaeological Assessment Report (Hartgen 2016), the Phase IB Archaeological Field Testin Report (Hartgen 2018) and the AWP (2023).

## HISTORIC PERIOD SENSITIVITY<sup>1</sup>

Around the 1680s, the overall area was owned by the Dutch Reformed Church. The area included the Church, a schoolhouse and a cemetery. Circumstantial evidence indicated that both enslaved and freed African and African Americans were buried within a portion of the cemetery. By the early nineteenth century the property became part of the New Lots Dutch Reformed Church. By the mid nineteenth century, the existing cemetery was decommissioned, and it is reported that many of the cemetery’s inhabitances were moved to a new cemetery property. It is stated that local African American residence may have continued to use the burial ground after the New Lots Dutch Reformed Church “closed” it.

From the mid to late nineteenth century much of the project area was a community schoolhouse, until the formal NYC Public School, Number 72, was constructed in 1886. The City maintained the school and property until the first quarter of the twentieth century when the area formerly became a playground associated with the school. The school closed in the mid-twentieth century

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<sup>1</sup> This section is excerpted from the NYC Parks’ Scope of Work for Sankofa Park (2024).

and the area became a public park. The former school building was demolished and reconstructed as part of the Brooklyn Public Library system.

The park was named Schenck Playground, one of the prominent early Dutch settlers of the area. In 2016, upon discovery of human remains through a park reconstruction project, the park was renamed Sankofa Park in honor of the African Americans, and their history, who were buried there.

For a more detailed project area history please refer to the Phase IA Documentary History and Archaeological Assessment Report (Hartgen 2016), the Phase IB Archaeological Field Testing Report (Hartgen 2018) and the AWP (2023).

### **III. PROJECT METHODS**

As outlined in the AWP, the current project was slated for archaeological monitoring to guide construction personnel should human skeletal remains, evidence of burials, or potentially significant cultural resources exposed during construction activities. The AWP described additional measures that would be undertaken in event of archaeological resources being encountered, including protocols for human remains, artifact analysis such as laboratory work, written reports, and further documentary research, if necessary (NYC Parks 2024).

#### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING**

All excavations in the areas designated within the AWP were archaeologically monitored. As previously stated, all standard archaeological monitoring procedures outlined in the AWP and the NYC Archaeological Guidelines, as applicable, were followed.

### **IV. FIELD RESULTS**

Field work began at the end of December 2023 and continued sporadically until August 2024. Chrysalis was on site for excavation work in specified areas, relying on Parks or the contractor to inform us of when excavation would occur in sensitive areas.

For ease of discussion this section is presented by type of excavation, e.g. electrical box, followed by images. Work for this project consisted of both removals and installations. Excavations progressed according to work activity, and not continually within a single area. For example, all the catch basins and their connecting trenches were excavated at different times, as were electrical boxes and their connecting trenches.

Therefore, excavation details are provided according to excavation episode, as opposed to area within the park. Some data is presented in a tabular format. See Map 4 for final archaeologically monitored excavation locations.

Prior to Chrysalis' arrival on site, some work had begun including the "pulling" of play area footings along the southwest section of the park. These were pulled without excavation and resulted in a 45cm deep hole in two areas. Other areas had tables and benches removed along with the associated underground concrete base. A walk-over of the entire area was conducted and spoils looked at, no human skeletal remains or fragments were observed.

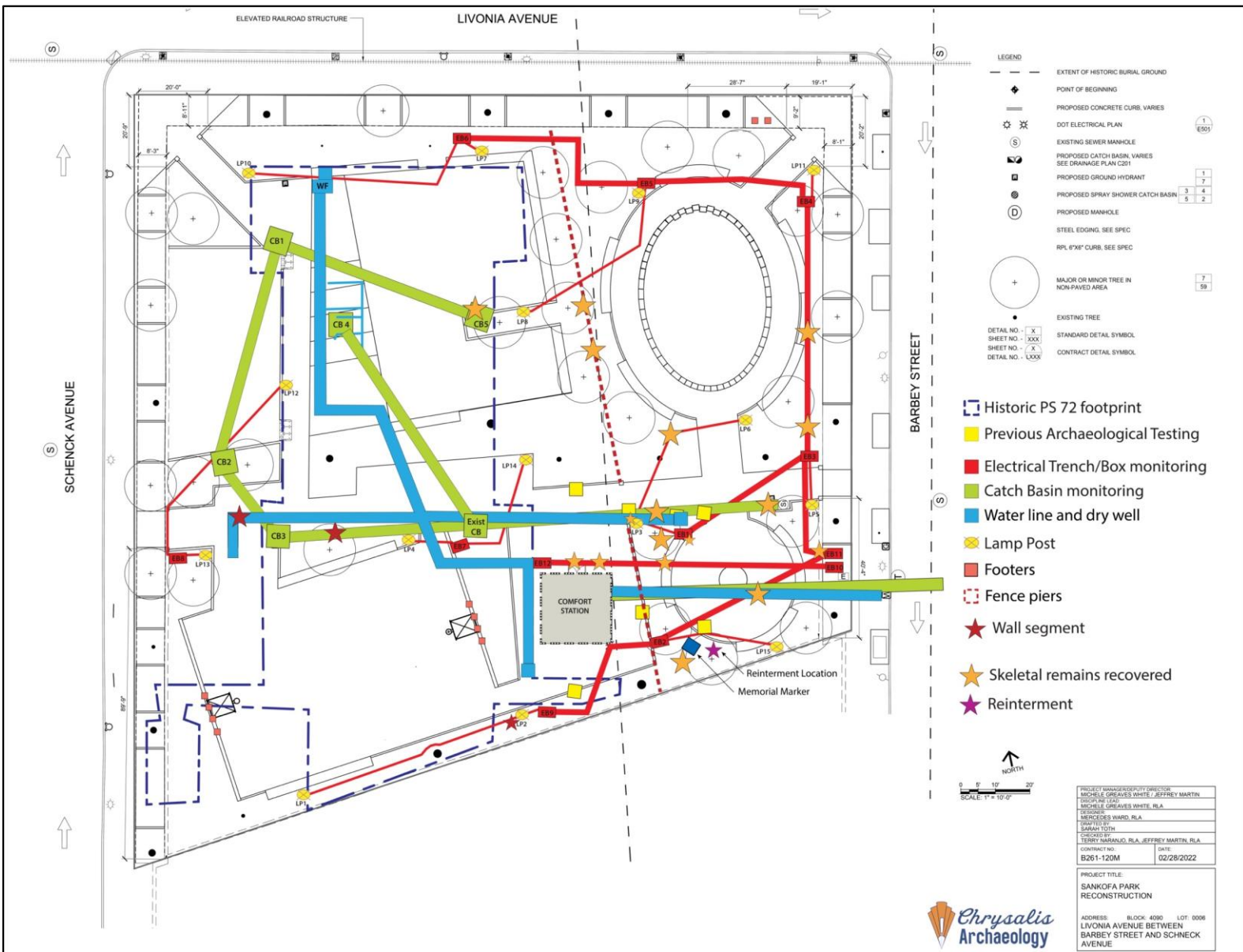
Both mechanical and manual excavation occurred during the project. The historic cemetery boundary was marked to ensure once the excavator approached the cemetery boundary a smaller unit was used to limit disturbance to human remains. Most commonly encounter soils were 10YR5/4 sand; 10YR5/6 sand fill and 10YR4/4 loamy sand. Many areas exhibited a high density of modern construction debris reflecting structural demolition.

Overall, the project area reflects a high degree of sub surface disturbance in accordance with the development history. All the human skeletal remains recovered were from severely disturbed contexts and in a poor state of preservation. No *in situ*, stratified and/or undisturbed human remains were observed. A total of 564 skeletal remains were recovered, these were fragmentary with some identifiable elements (Appendix A). Generally, remains were recovered at or beyond 2' (17.2 ft NAVD88) below ground surface (bgs)<sup>2</sup>.

It is noted that remains were recovered outside the boundaries of the historic cemetery, including within the footprint of the former public school. This indicates a level of mixed contexts that go beyond the footprints of historic features. Future work in the vicinity of Sankofa Park should take this into account.

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<sup>2</sup> Field measurements were recorded as below ground surface/existing elevation preconstruction. The average NAVD88 elevation for the construction area is 19.2 ft with a range of 18.37 ft at the eastern end of the park and 19.62 ft at the western end of the park. The current project added varying amounts of soil, increasing the pre-construction grade in some areas.



Map 4: Archaeological Site Map. NYC Parks basemap 2022.

## EXCAVATION RESULTS

### REMOVALS

Existing curbs throughout the park were removed. Removal of 3' curb at sidewalk outside and adjacent to the southern cemetery boundary. Soils were a 10YR4/4 sandy loam. No artifacts or human remains were found. As the curbs were removed, they were backfilled immediately.

The curb running east/west was 2' bgs. The eastern half lay within the cemetery footprint. At the western end, outside the cemetery clean 10YR5/6 sand was present underneath the sidewalk and cement curb. To the east where the curb passed over the cemetery soil was 10YR4/3 loamy silty sand with no evidence of clean sand fill. It was determined that these were natural soils. Excavation associated with this curb removal extended less than 18" bgs. No artifacts or human remains were observed.

The flagpole base was removed extending to 10" bgs. No additional excavation was needed as the plan called for chipping away the base to desired depth.

An 89' trench was excavated proceeding east to remove the ceramic pipe between an existing catch basin (CB) and a manhole located 19' west of the eastern park fence. A femur fragment was found 10' east of comfort station. Three more human remain fragments were found within the next 15' stretch of the trench.

The existing ceramic utility line was located 5' bgs. Soils consisted of 10YR5/4 sand fill with fragmentary and whole bricks and segments of brick walls. These brick wall segments were not *in situ* but part of the construction debris in the trench.

In total five skeletal fragments were found from this trench – two femurs, two fragments of long bone and one possible skull fragment. See Images 1 and 2 for representative images.





Image 1: Location of recovered skeletal remains, adjacent to and below plastic bag.



Image 2: Femur recovered in fill soils adjacent to the Comfort Station.

## *CATCH BASINS*

Excavation for Catch Basins (CB) measuring 6' by 8', extended 7' to 9' below existing grade. Following excavation and installation of the catch basins, connecting trenches were excavated to 4' bgs. This discussion uses the contractor's numeric designation for the catch basins. Refer to Map 3 for location detail and Images 3-19.

### **CB1**

Located in the northwest area of the park at the corner of Schenk and Livonia Avenues, soils were mixed fill with whole and fragmentary bricks, fire bricks, wood and concrete fragments. At 1.5' bgs two unconnected in situ brick walls were exposed projecting from the profile. The edges of each were removed for the catch basin installation. At 3' bgs dead utility lines were removed. Soils contained construction debris throughout the area until the final excavation depth.

The remnant walls were likely associated with the former school building. No significant artifacts or human remains were encountered.

### **CB2**

Following removal of the sidewalk and associated construction debris CB2 exhibited clean sand (10YR5/6) and large rocks throughout. Excavation extended to 9' bgs to accommodate. No artifacts or human remains.

### **CB3**

CB3 was excavated to 9' bgs following removal of the 5" asphalt/macadam layer. Intact brick walls were observed on the north and west walls of the excavation area. At 8' bgs an intact cement floor was encountered and removed. Former wooden shoring and construction debris were also observed throughout the entirety of the CB3 excavation. No significant artifacts or human remains were observed.

### **CB4**

CB4 had a similar stratigraphic profile as CB5, outlined below. No artifacts or human remains were encountered.

### **CB5**

During excavation of CB5 a 5" concrete floor was exposed at 4' bgs. This was removed mechanically. No artifacts or human remains observed. Stratigraphy consisted of topsoil, a 6" layer of 10YR4/4 loamy sand; followed by a 1' layer of 10YR5/2 sand fill with bricks; a 2' concrete/brick/gravel fill layer; and 10YR5/6 clean sand to the final 7' bgs excavation depth.

## **Catch Basin Connection Trenches**

CB connection trenches were of varying lengths, 4' wide and extended to 4' bgs unless otherwise noted.

Trench at CB1 proceeded south to connect with CB2. This work required removal of the small section of brick wall running north-south exposed at CB1. The wall was an isolated segment. The northern section of the trench, closest to CB1, contained 2.5' of brick/concrete debris and gravel fill. This was followed by 10YR5/6 sand fill extending to the final excavation depth of 4' bgs. Approximately 15' north of CB1 the soil consisted entirely of 10YR5/6 clean sand fill.

Dead utility lines were removed as during excavation. Only one diagnostic artifact was observed, an early to mid-twentieth century metal lamp shade. No human remains were encountered.

Excavations to connect CB1 to CB5 proceeded east from CB1. At 5' west of CB5 rebar reinforced concrete was encountered at 1' bgs. The concrete measured 1' in diameter and extended into the trench walls. Likely a former footing, the concrete was removed. The excavator was able to remove the rebar reinforced concrete. A second segment of concrete was exposed 15' west of CB5.

One diagnostic artifact was exposed, a brick embossed with 'WAU'. These are the initials of a brick manufacturer named William A. Underhill that made bricks starting in the 1830's. This was photographed and discarded in the field. No human remains were observed.

A trench, proceeding north, to connect CB4 to the existing catch basin in the middle of the park, was located 10' to the west and north of the Comfort Station. A concrete floor was exposed 20' from CB4 at 4' bgs. The concrete floor spanned 10' before being interrupted by a curb and tree stump which were removed. The concrete floor then continued to the end of the trench. Portions of the floor adjacent to CB4 were removed, and clean sand was visible underneath.

Soils adjacent to curb that was removed contained a concentration of bricks and other construction debris. This, along with the concrete floor suggests a basement level, or crawl space associated with a former structure. No significant artifacts or human remains were encountered.

The trench to connect CB2 and CB3 measured 25' in length. Cement curb and blocks were removed as excavations continued southeast. All soils in this trench were 10YR5/6 clean sand fill. No artifacts or human remains observed.

The trench connecting the existing CB to CB3 encountered the upper portion of an already disturbed brick wall. All soils were 10YR5/6 sand and gravel with whole and fragmentary bricks. No artifacts or human remains were observed.





Image 3: Site overview, looking east at area of catch basin excavations.



Image 4: CB 3 showing *in situ* brick wall running east-west.





Image 5: CB3 showing a second brick wall running north-south.



Image 6: Clean sand fill beneath the concrete floor in CB5.





Image 7: Stratigraphy of north wall in CB5.



Image 8: End of excavations in CB4.





Image 9: Connection trenches facing southeast from CB1.



Image 10: End of excavation CB1 to CB5 connection trench looking east.





Image 11: WAU brick from CB1 to CB5 connection trench.



Image 12: Metal lamp shade from CB1 to CB5 connection trench.





Image 13: Fully exposed concrete floor, connection trench from existing CB to CB4.



Image 14: Exposed brick wall and associated demolition rubble, CB3 west wall.





Image 15: Brick wall along north wall connecting to brick wall on west wall of CB3.



Image 16: CB3 south wall.





Image 17: *In situ* brick wall running north-south, located 10' from existing CB.



Image 18: Possible crawl space on north wall of existing CB and CB3 connection trench.





Image 19: Section of brick wall left *in situ* in trench connecting existing CB and CB3.

### *ELECTRICAL BOXES*

A total of 12 Electrical Boxes (EB) were installed (Map 3 Images 20-25). Excavations for the electrical boxes measured 3' by 5' extending to 3' bgs unless otherwise noted. At the center of each unit a 12" by 12" by 12" hole was excavated at the final depth for drainage. Associated connection trenches measured 2' wide and extended to 3' bgs. Data for the electrical boxes is presented in tabular format as there was little variation among excavation units (Table 2).

Table 2: Electrical Box excavation summary.

EB ID	Soils	Notes
EB1	10YR6/6 sand fill	Human remains at 1' bgs (18.2 NAVD88). Fragments of multiple long bones in very poor condition scattered throughout.
EB2	10YR5/6 sand fill with construction debris, brick, asphalt and concrete fragments	One fragmentary long bone
EB3	10YR5/4 sand (0 – 1') 10YR6/6 sand (1' – 3')	No human remains were exposed.
EB4	mixed 10YR4/4 loamy sand mottled with 10YR5/4 sand	Whole and fragmentary bricks. No human remains.
EB5	1' thick asphalt and gravel mixed fill followed by 10YR5/4 sand	Excavation extended to 2' bgs. No human remains.
EB6	10YR5/4 loamy silty sand	Excavated to 2' bgs. No human remains.

EB ID	Soils	Notes
EB7	10YR4/4 sand fill with a large amount of construction debris including whole and fragmentary brick	Household materials e.g. flooring tiles and butchered animal bone, no diagnostic artifacts. No human remains.
EB8	10YR5/6 sand fill mixed with brick and concrete fragments, large rocks	No human remains.
EB9	10YR5/6 sand fill	No human remains.
EB10	gravel and sand (0 – 2’); 10YR4/4 and 10YR5/6 coarse sand	No human remains.
EB11	gravel and sand (0 – 2’); 10YR4/4 and 10YR5/6 coarse sand	No human remains.
EB12	10YR5/6 coarse sand	No human remains.

### Electrical Box Connecting Trenches

Trench excavations for the EB connections were predominantly located along the north, east and south perimeters of the park extending to 2’ bgs. Generally, these trenches contained construction debris and areas with old utility lines. Observed soils were predominantly 10YR 5/6 sand fill or coarse sand. All skeletal remains recovered were in highly disturbed contexts.

The trench connecting EB3 and EB4 was excavated to 25” bgs parallel to Barbey St. The general stratigraphic profile consisted of 13” curb followed by 10YR4/4 loamy sand to 2’ bgs where it transitions to 25” sand. Two human skeletal fragments were found at the 25” bgs (17.1 NAVD88) midway through the trench 37’ north of EB3.

As the trench continued north a higher concentration of construction debris was present, including large rocks and gravel. The total length of trench measured 70’. No other human skeletal remains were found.

Three skeletal fragments were found at the end of the bend at the cemetery boundary in the EB2 and EB9 connecting trench, 1’ from the SE edge of the comfort station. These were recovered at 2’ bgs (17.2 NAVD88). These long bone fragments were scattered and did not represent a burial. No other skeletal remains were recovered. Soils throughout the trench were 10YR5/6 sand fill.

Excavation approaching EB1 did not encounter any human remains, even though remains were found during excavation of EB1. This is likely due to the 2’ bgs final excavation depth, which is above the depth that skeletal remains were recovered. Soils consisted of 10YR5/6 coarse sand.

The connection trench between EB10 to EB12 was only excavated to 18” bgs; soils were 10YR5/6 coarse sand. Two femur fragments were found 15’ east of the comfort station and one small fragment was found 3’ east of the comfort station. Both were 18” bgs (17.7 NAVD88). A partial skull fragment was also recovered.

Along the south fence line an expanded 7' area was excavated adjacent to EB9 to facilitate landscaping and drainage. An intact brick wall was uncovered starting at 5" bgs. Excavation only extended 13" bgs in this area. The wall was left in situ.

The wall was partially demolished and removed to 13" above final grade to accommodate future excavations for the connections. No human remains were encountered.



Image 20: Large rocks and whole bricks exhibited throughout EB 7.





Image 21: EB 3 and EB 4 connection trench, east wall profile.



Image 22: Full view of drainage trench west of EB 9 showing brick wall.





Image 23: Plan view of intact brick wall in drainage trench west of EB 9.



Image 24: Example of north wall stratigraphy showing coarse 10YR5/6 sand fill seen in EB connection trenches.





Image 25: EB 10 and 12 connection trenches traversing the cemetery east to west.

### *WATER CONNECTIONS.*

Trenches measuring 3' wide were excavated to connect various water-related features including a drinking fountain, bottle refilling station, future hydrant, dry wells and playground sprinklers (Map 3 and Images 26-28). A 3' wide trench was excavated to 4' bgs from the comfort station to the water connection along Barbey Street. One jaw fragment was found at 3' bgs (16.2 NAVD88), 42' east of comfort station.

Trenching connected the water fountain at the NW section of the park to the dry well at the southeast end of the park. Trenching advanced in depth proceeding south and included five bends (segments). The excavation depth began with 2' bgs and increased 1" every 10' to a final depth of 3' bgs at the southern point. No significant artifacts or human remains were encountered.

The drinking fountain base is located 15ft northeast of CB1. Excavation measured 4' by 6'. Soils consisted of construction debris with asphalt, cement and gravel mixed with sand and brick fragments. Excavations for a bottled water filling station base (2' by 2' to 3' bgs) and sprinkler jets also occurred. Both exhibiting similar soils. No human remains were encountered.

Excavations for the dry wells at the northern and southern ends of the water fountain line measured 4' square and extended to 4' bgs. Soils were 10YR4/4 with whole and fragmentary bricks and concrete fragments extending to 20" bgs, followed by 10YR5/6 clean sand fill. No significant artifacts or human remains were observed.



Another dry well was excavated 10' east of LP3, northeast of the comfort station, measuring 4' by 4' and extending to 4.5' bgs. The trench connecting the drywell to the water lines encountered a 20' section contain scattered skeletal remains. All remains were highly disturbed, incomplete and in a poor state of preservation.



Image 26: Stratigraphy associated with water fountain base excavation.



Image 27: Brick wall in main water trench.





Image 28: Brick wall exposed during water trench excavation.

### **Hydrant**

Excavations started for the hydrant 6' to the NW of the existing CB in the middle of the park. A partial brick wall was demolished at the 55' mark going west. Most of it was left to hammer out later. At 60' the trench bent to the south. The final bend was 10' to where the new hydrant will be located. No significant artifacts or human remains were encountered.

### *CURBS*

Trenching for new curbing throughout the park measured 3' wide and extended between 13" to 24" bgs. Excavation for the east/west oriented curb trench noted 10YR5/6 clean sand beneath the former sidewalk outside the cemetery line. Approaching the cemetery line and within the cemetery footprint soils were 10YR4/3 loamy silty sand with no fill. Excavations for this trench extended to 18" bgs.

Trenching for curbs in the basketball court area encountered brick wall remnants along the new western fence line. These were left in situ. Soils were 10YR5/4 and 10YR4/4 mottled loamy sand. Excavation for four footers also occurred along the wester curb line. These measured 3' by 4' and extended to 4' bgs, spaced at 5' intervals. Soils consisted of construction debris with whole and



fragmented brick, concrete and asphalt. No skeletal remains or significant artifacts were exposed during curb excavations.

### *LAMP POSTS (LP)*

Excavation for 15 lamp post footings and trenches to connect them to the electrical boxes occurred throughout the park (Map 3). Each measured are 3' by 4' to 3' bgs unless otherwise noted. Data for the lamp post excavation is summarized in tabular format (Table 3).

Table 3: Lamp Post excavation summary.

LP	Soils	Notes
1	10YR4/4 loamy sand	No human remains
2	10YR4/4 loamy sand	No human remains
3	10YR4/4 very fine loamy sand	Many skeletal fragments at 12" bgs (18.2 NAVD88). Minimal skeletal fragments in the last 1' (17.2 – 16.2 NAVD88) of excavation there were very in fine sand fill. Measurements: 2' by 4' to 3' bgs.
4	10YR4/4 loamy sand	Construction debris throughout. Brick wall segment on the west wall of excavation, left in situ. No human remains.
5	10YR 4/4 sand fill with brick fragments.	Measurements: 3' by 5' to 3' bgs. No human remains.
6	10YR 4/4 sand fill	Measurements: 3' by 5' to 3' bgs. No human remains.
7	Construction debris	No human remains.
8	Construction debris with brick, gravel, and asphalt (0 – 17"); Coarse sand to 3' bgs	No human remains.
9	Dark gravel with 10YR3/2 sand fill (0 – 12"); 10YR5/4 coarse sand fill to 31"bgs.	No human remains. Concrete exposed at 31" bgs (16.6 NAVD88).
10	Construction debris	Partial brick wall at 15" bgs in SE corner of unit, removed. No human remains.
11	Gravel (0 – 10"); Sand and coarse sand (10" – 21"); Fine sand to 32" bgs	No human remains.
12	construction debris (0 - 15"); sand (15" – 36")	No human remains.
13		Previously excavated for connection trench between EB7 and EB8.
14	Gravel and 10YR3/2 sand (0 – 7"); 10YR5/4 fine sand (7" to 18"); 10YR5/8 coarse sand (18" to 42")	No human remains. No construction debris.
15	10YR5/4 sand.	No human remains.

Lamp post connection trenches generally extended between 12" – 18" bgs and contained fill soils with construction debris. With one exception, no human skeletal remains were encountered in the connection trenches, likely due to their relatively shallow depth.

The trench connection LP 6 to EB1 exposed a crushed skull including teeth. Further troweling recovered three vertebra and other fragmentary remains. Skeletal remains extend beyond the depth required for installing that went further beyond the grade level to be excavated. All the remains appear to be scattered and not of an intact full individual.

The decision was made to leave the larger remains that would require a larger scope of excavations in situ, as they will not be further impacted. The Park renovation landscaping with add approximately 5' of soil and other plant materials to this area.

Later, LP3 was relocated. The relocation pit measured 7' by 4' to a depth of 3.5' bgs. Map 3 reflects the final location 5' west and 3' north of its original location. In the new location partial skull fragments with jawbone and teeth were recovered at 12" to 18" bgs (18.2 – 17.7 NAVD88). The skull was not part of an intact body and is further evidence of previous excavations having impacted burial/skeletal remains which were then mixed with the construction backfill. The soil profile consisted of 10YR5/6 sand with construction debris such as fragmentary and whole bricks and concrete sections throughout the entirety of the excavation.

#### *PIERS AND FOOTERS*

Several piers and footers were excavated throughout the park for fences and signage (Map 3 and Images 29-31). The 31 pier pits were associated with the new fence separating the memorial area the park. Pits were excavated north (Livonia Avenue) to south beginning with number 1. The 37 pits were for various play equipment and signage footers.

These pits generally measured 14" by 12" and extended to a depth of 18" bgs, though some were excavated to 24" bgs. Excavation soils throughout were like those seen throughout the park within 12" to 18", predominantly construction fill followed by 10YR 5/6 coarse sand. Highly fragmented human skeletal remains were found in four pier pits. No skeletal remains were found in the footer pits.

Pier pit 16 contained approximately one-third of a fragmentary skull exposed at 9" to 12" bgs (18.45 – 18.2 NAVD88). The pit was expanded by 6" to facilitate recovery. No other human remains fragments were found in this pier pit.

Within pier pit 19, 10ft south of pier pit 16, scattered skeletal fragments were found. Pier pit 20 contained one small, long bone fragment found at 18" bgs (17.7 NAVD88). This pit also contained many large rocks and bricks

Pier pit 28 contained a fragment of a long bone within the coarse sand fill layer which also contained whole and fragmentary bricks and concrete fragments. The skeletal fragment was found at 12" bgs (18.2 NAVD88). Additional fragments were found lower at 24" bgs (17.2 NAVD88). Bricks continued throughout the pit until the final excavation depth.



Image 29: Example of fill soils in pier pit 5.



Image 30: Example of fill soils in pier pit 10.





Image 31: Excavation for pier pits, looking north.

## **MEMORIAL PLAQUE AND REINTERMENT**

An existing memorial plaque marking the previous reinterment was removed. The new memorial marker to be installed in the same location measures 3.1' by 4', sloping from a height of 1.4' to 4" (Map 3 and Images 32-34). The bronze symbol of the old marker will be attached to this new plaque. Excavations were not required for removal and installation.

To the north of the new memorial and 3' by 5' reinterment pit was excavated to 5' bgs (14.2 NAVD88). The southern edge of this was alongside the park curb. Concerns of future work prompted the project to move the pit approximately 4' north. Several skeletal remains were recovered at 2' bgs (17.2 NAVD88) in this new excavation. The surrounding soils were extremely fine 10YR 5/6 sandy soil. Some skeletal elements were identifiable, but their poor state of preservation led to significant fragmentation upon removal. It was not discernible if these represented a single individual, as skeletal elements were at times articulated they were incorrectly positioned regarding overall skeletal anatomy. If these remains do represent a single individual, the burial was highly disturbed and compacted.

Following recovery of the remains, excavation encountered several large tree roots that prevent excavation beyond 3.5' bgs. In consultation with the archaeologist, project manager, and construction personnel the reinterment pit was moved to a third and final location (Figure 1).

Reinterment occurred on Tuesday, October 29, 2024. The ceremony was attended by Parks Borough Commissioner Martin Maher, Project Manager Michelle White, Alyssa Loorya and Elissa Rutigliano from Chrysalis, and construction personnel.





Image 32: Removal of old memorial plaque.



Image 33: New memorial marker.





Image 34: Excavation of final reinterment area.

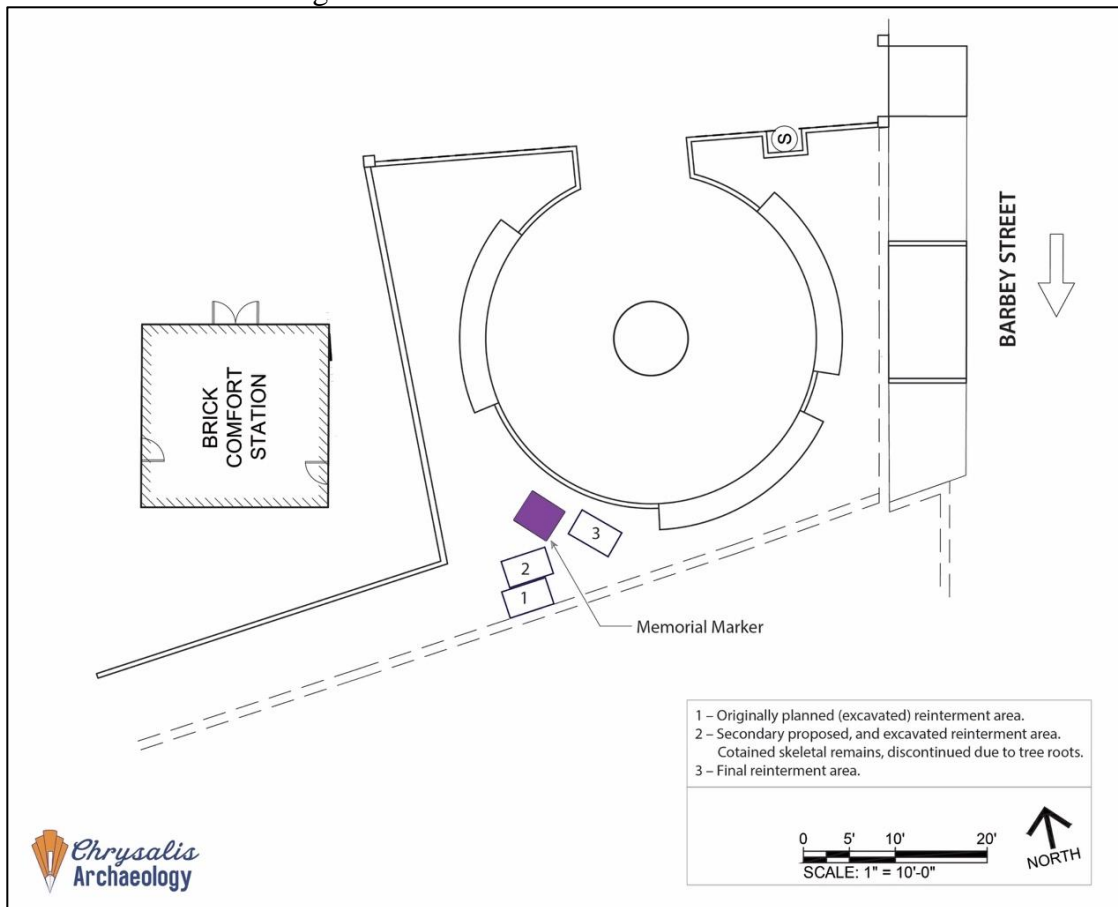


Figure 1: Memorial marker and reinterment plan.

## **V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Archaeological monitoring demonstrated that human skeletal remains continue to be present beneath surface of Sankofa Park. On average, skeletal remains were found at 2' bgs (17.2 NAVD88). The remains were identified at depth ranging from a minimum of 12" bgs (18.2 NAVD88) to as deep as 3' bgs (16.2 NAVD88) (relative to the pre-existing grade).

The project area shows significant subsurface disturbance, resulting in mixed contexts. Human skeletal remains were recovered outside the boundaries of the historic cemetery, within the footprint of the former public school, and in earlier construction trenches. All recovered remains were from disturbed contexts and exhibited poor preservation.

Although no skeletal remains were found beyond 3' bgs, during this project, their presence at greater depths cannot be ruled out. In instances where remains were recovered at the 3' bgs depth, this marked the limit of the construction excavation. Additionally, the presence of skeletal remains in previous utility trenches indicates that remains could potentially be encountered at the depth of those excavations.

Future work within Sankofa Park and surrounding areas should include archaeological monitoring to ensure the identification and recovery of any disturbed human remains.

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## **APPENDIX A – INVENTORY**



FS	Location	Count	Remains	Identifications		Notes
SP-01	Excavated trench connecting the existing catch basin in the middle of the park to the manhole	25	4	Lower Limb	Femoral shaft (1), distal femoral shaft (2), tibial shaft (1)	First fragments encountered 10' east of comfort station. Last small fragment was 25' east of the comfort station at a depth of 4'-5'
			21	Miscl.	Unidentified fragments (21)	
SP-02	Electrical Box 1 (23' to the east of the comfort station)	100	100	Lower Limb	Femoral shaft (1), tibial shaft (2), long bone shaft fragments (97)	Encountered at a depth of 2'-3' bgs
SP-03	Electrical Box 2	7	7	Lower Limb	Tibial shaft (1), tibial shaft fragments (2), fibular shaft fragments (4)	Encountered at NW edge of monument
SP-04	Trench between Electrical Boxes 3 and 4	6	3	Lower Limb	Tibial shaft fragments (3)	Encountered 36' north of Electrical Box 3
			3	Miscl.	Unidentified fragments (3)	
SP-05	Utility trench between Electrical Boxes 9 and 12	8	8	Lower Limb	Tibial shaft fragment (1), long bone shaft fragments (7)	Encountered directly atop of cemetery boundary
SP-06	Water trench east of comfort station	1	1	Lower Limb	Innominate fragment (1)	Encountered 42' east of the comfort station and at a depth of 3' bgs
SP-08	Connection trench between Electrical Boxes 10 and 12	7	3	Lower Limb	Femoral shafts (2), long bone shaft fragment (1)	Two (2) femoral shafts encountered 15' east of comfort station; and one (1) unidentified fragment encountered 3' east of comfort station
			4	Miscl.	Unidentified fragments (4)	
SP-10	Connection trench between Electrical Boxes 11 and 12	5	5	Skull	Calvaria (1), occipital bone (1), cranial fragments (3)	Encountered 3' west of east curbline at a depth of 2' bgs
SP-11	Connection trench between Lamppost 6 and Electrical Box 1	54	44	Skull	Mandible (1), articulated teeth (8), temporal bone fragments (10), occipital bone fragments (11), cranial and splanchnocranium fragments (14)	Encountered at a depth of 1' bgs
			10	Miscl.	Unidentified fragments (10)	
SP-12	Lamppost 3	100	38	Upper Limb	Humeral shaft (2), humeral head (1), long bone shaft fragments (6), long bone fragments (16), scapula fragment (1), carpal fragments (12)	Encountered at a depth of 12" to 18" bgs
			62	Miscl.	Unidentified fragments (62)	
SP-13	Location of new Electrical Box 1; 25' E and 15' N of comfort station	35	1	Lower Limb	Tibial shaft (1)	Encountered at a depth of 12" bgs; quickly disintegrating fragments
			34	Miscl.	Unidentified fragments (34)	

FS	Location	Count	Remains	Identifications		Notes
SP-14	New location of Lamppost; 15' NE of comfort station	54	19	Skull	Cranial fragments (14), splanchocranium fragments (5), disarticulated teeth (9)	Encountered at a depth of 12" to 18" bgs; includes multiple disarticulated teeth
			2	Axial	Sacrum fragments (2)	
			24	Miscl.	Unidentified fragments (24)	
SP-15	Footing auger pit; 17' E and 15' N of comfort station	1	1	Lower Limb	Fibular fragment (1)	Encountered at a depth of 3' bgs
SP-16	Pier Pit 16, 17' E of Lamppost	45	45	Skull	Cranial fragments (45)	Encountered at a depth of 9" bgs
SP-17	Pier Pit 19, 10' S of Positive Pit 16	7	7	Axial	Rib fragments (7)	Encountered at a depth of 10" bgs
SP-18	Pier Pit 20	1	1	Miscl.	Unidentified fragment (1)	Encountered at a depth of 18" bgs
SP-19	Pier Pit 28, 22' N of new curbline	9	9	Skull	Zygomatic fragments (2), splanchocranium fragments (2), cranial fragments (5)	Encountered at a depth of 1' bgs
SP-20	Drywell connection trench, 20' W of curbline and 18' N of comfort station	30	26	Skull	Cranial fragments (23), occipital bone fragments (3)	
			4	Upper Limb	Humoral shaft fragments (2), long bone fragments (2)	
SP-21	Drywell, 22' NE of comfort station	15	15	Miscl.	Unidentified fragments (15)	
SP-22	Reinterment pit 2	54	13	Skull	Cranial fragments (13)	Encountered at a depth of 2'-2.5' bgs. Area was abandoned for potential reinterment due to obstruction by tree root. Remains were extremely fragmented and in poor condition.
			4	Axial	Vertebrae fragments (4)	
			7	Upper Limb	Long bone shaft fragments (7)	
			8	Lower Limb	Long bone shaft fragments (8)	
			22	Miscl.	Unidentified fragments (22)	
TOTAL RECOVERED		564				



