

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/111/0034
	Site Name	Herschel Memorial Obelisk, Grove Primary School,
	Date	Cape Town
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-33.982981, 18.460354
Page No: 1 SiteAutoID: 27033		

Site Category: Monuments & Memorials

SiteComments:

Archive Import History: Beyond Newlands lies the suburb of Claremont. The Herschel monument stands in Grove Avenue on what was formerly the Feldhausen property. Sir John F. W. Herschel (1792-1871) was a famous British astronomer, the only son of an equally famous astronomer, Sir William Herschel. He came to the Cape in January, 1834, to make astronomical observations. He went to live at Claremont and stayed there until March, 1838. Sir John Herschel brought a reflecting telescope of six metres focal length with him and housed it in a small building near the house Feldhausen in which he and his family lived. He was assisted in his observations by a technician John Stone and he also enjoyed the uninterrupted collaboration of Sir Thomas Maclear, Her Majesty's Astronomer at the Cape. During his stay he charted the Argo nebula, placing 1 203 stars in it; catalogued 1 163 objects in the magellanic clouds; discovered and tabulated nearly 2 000 other nebulae and clusters; discovered 1 202 pairs of double stars and observed Halley's comet from 28th October, 1835, to 5th May, 1836. In addition to his astronomical work, Sir John, in collaboration with Fairbairn, assisted the Cape Government in setting up a system of education. It is also known that he carried out pioneer work in photography before he came to the Cape and in 1839 he was one of the co-discoverers of photography, independently of Talbot and Daguerre. On his departure in 1838, he placed a small granite cylinder on the spot where the six metre telescope had stood and on 15th February, 1841, an obelisk of Craighleith stone was erected on top of this cylinder. The inscription reads:— "Here stood from MDCCCXXXIV to MDCCCXXXVIII the reflecting telescope of Sir John F. W. Herschel, Baronet, who during a residence of four years in this colony contributed largely by his benevolent exertions to the cause of education and humanity as by his eminent talents to the discovery of scientific truth." The site of the obelisk has recently been incorporated in the grounds of the Grove Primary School. Visual Description: Colours: Site Features: Condition: Construction Date: Materials: Catalogue: , No: , Significance Category:

Damage Types: