

9/2/015/35

Dr J Deacon

23 November 1992

The Town Clerk
Greyton Municipality
Greyton
7233

Dear Sir

ROCK PAINTINGS IN NOUPOORT, GREYTON NATURE RESERVE

In response to a report from Mr David Edwards that a rock shelter in the Greyton nature reserve had been vandalized with graffiti, a team from the National Monuments Council visited the site with Mr Edwards on Sunday 22 November. As rock art conservation will be a theme for Environment Week in 1994, the National Monuments Council is embarking on a programme to clean up sites with rock paintings and engravings that are regularly visited by the public to assess their potential and offer management guidelines. Our visit to Greyton was part of this exercise.

The shelter is on the western bank of the Noupoot stream north of the town of Greyton. It faces northwards. The floor is a series of large flat slabs that have been worn smooth and dip towards the mouth and western side of the shelter. The roof and back wall are stepped back in a series of overhangs of different height. There is some evidence of the site having been occupied in a small area on the far eastern side near the entrance, but it is unlikely that there is any depth of deposit present.

There are two panels of rock paintings, all in red ochre. The first on the left, labelled Panel 6 on the attached plan, includes two elongated human figures in red, one with a hook head, and the red body of an eland. It is likely that the neck, head and legs of the eland were done in yellow or white and have since faded away. No graffiti were present on these paintings. The second painted panel, labelled Panel 2, has a series of about nine indistinct human figures that have weathered and faded considerably. However, in three places there are a number of thin whitish lines that possibly represent groups of arrows. There were charcoal and scratched graffiti on both sides of this panel and across some of the paintings.

The other four 'panels' had only graffiti. The oldest dates were in the early 1960s and the most recent legible one was 1982. With the exception of a circle with lines across it, all

prepared to be initials or names of people rather than slogans.

The NMC team drew a plan of the shelter to scale (see attached), traced the rock paintings and graffiti on panels 1, 2 and 6, and made notes on the graffiti on panels 3, 4 and 5 where there were no rock paintings. All the panels (1-6) were photographed before and after graffiti removal using colour slide and colour print film.

The charcoal graffiti were removed using a method adapted in Australia and the USA from techniques developed for cleaning Medieval wall art in Italy and France. We could not remove lines done with yellow crayon or ochre on Panels 1 and 2. A few scratched graffiti on Panel 1, the date 1966 on Panel 2 and HH L ADV on Panel 5, were lightly disguised using a method pioneered in Australia that involves the use of minute quantities of acrylic artist's paint.

The site is not easily accessible, the floor of the shelter is slippery and could be dangerous, and the paintings are too indistinct to warrant promotion of the site as an attraction for visitors. It is therefore probably not advisable to erect a notice board or to publicise it. However, we would like to request that the Municipal official in charge of the nature reserve should visit the rock shelter from time to time (possibly annually) so that the NMC can be notified if and when further graffiti appear. Should it be possible to identify the person or persons responsible for graffiti at the site, the Council would be grateful if you could report the matter to the police.

All rock art sites in South Africa are protected in terms of the National Monuments Act which states that anyone found guilty of damaging, destroying or removing rock paintings or rock engravings without a permit from the Council is liable for a fine of up to R10 000 or two years' imprisonment, or both. Removal of graffiti from rock art sites should be done only under supervision of a qualified person with a valid permit from the Council.

Your assistance in this regard would be much appreciated.

Yours faithfully

for DIRECTOR

JD/jd

copy: NMC Western Cape Regional Manager

NATIONAL MONUMENTS COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

TO: Western Cape Regional Manager

ATTN: Laura Robinson

FROM: Archaeologist

Janette Deacon

REF: 9/2/015/35

DATE: 23.11.92

SUBJECT: Rock Martin shelter on Kanon Berg 33, Greyton, Caledon District

In response to a report from Mr David Edwards (tel. 686 8282) that this rock shelter in the nature reserve managed by Greyton Municipality had been vandalized with graffiti, Mr Edwards showed us the site on Sunday 22 November.

The shelter is on the western bank of the Noupoot stream north of the town of Greyton. It faces northwards. The floor is a series of large flat slabs that have been worn smooth and dip towards the mouth and western side of the shelter. The roof and back wall are stepped back in a series of overhangs of different height. There is some evidence of the site having been occupied in a small area on the far eastern side near the entrance, but it is unlikely that there is any depth of deposit present.

There are two panels of rock paintings, all in red ochre. The first on the left, labelled Panel 6 on the attached plan, includes two elongated human figures in red, one with a hook head, and the red body of an eland. It is likely that the neck, head and legs of the eland were done in yellow or white and have since faded away. No graffiti were present on these paintings. The second painted panel, labelled Panel 2, has a series of about nine indistinct human figures that have weathered and faded considerably. However, in three places there are a number of thin whitish lines that possibly represent groups of arrows. There were charcoal and scratched graffiti on both sides of this panel and across some of the paintings.

The other four 'panels' had only graffiti. The oldest dates were in the early 1960s and the most recent legible one was 1982. With the exception of a circle with lines across it, all appeared to be initials or names of people rather than slogans.

The NMC team, comprising J Deacon, P Farmer, R Martin, M Nojoko, B Rogers, B Scholtz and A van Dieman, drew a plan of the shelter to scale (see attached), traced the rock paintings and graffiti on panels 1, 2 and 6, and made notes on the graffiti on panels 3, 4 and 5 where there were no rock paintings. All the panels (1-6) were photographed before and after graffiti removal using colour slide and colour print film.

6. The charcoal graffiti were removed using a soft paint brush followed by a rolling cotton-wool poultice with distilled water. This method also removed a few lines done with a white chalky substance. It could not remove lines done with yellow crayon or

ochre on Panels 1 and 2. A few scratched graffiti on Panel 1, the date 1966 on Panel 2 and HH L ADV on Panel 5, were lightly disguised with a very small quantity of acrylic paint spotted on with a No. 1 artist's paintbrush.

On panel 1, three large initials, G M to the right and M in the centre, were difficult to remove completely with the above method. As no rock paintings were present on this panel, the initials were scrubbed with a cut-off paint brush and distilled water. A sheet of paper towel moistened with distilled water was then placed over the initials to draw salts from the rock so that they would not be deposited on the surface of the shelter wall.

The site is not easily accessible and the paintings are too indistinct to promote as an attraction for visitors so it is probably not advisable to erect a notice board. A copy of this report will be sent to the Greyton Municipality with a request that the site be visited from time to time so that the NMC can be notified if and when further graffiti appear.