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NATIONAL MONUMENTS COUNCIL

REPORT ON ROCK ART ON THE FARM BANGHOEK, PIKETBERG DISTRICT

File No. 9/2/072/3
Report by: Dr J Deacon

Date: 1 October 1990

Owner: Mr Bobby Hack

Tel: (0261) 4863

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posse*

Mr Hack applied for rezoning of his property for sectional title to allow the construction of an initial 30 holiday cottages, with the option of 10 more at a later stage. Sixteen plots have been sold thus far and it is expected that the major influx of visitors will start in 1991. The property was visited over the weekend of 22/23 September 1990 by J. Deacon, S. Bassett, L. Roussouw, W. Ackerman, F. Prins, D. Seeman, T. and C. Rhebok, Corne, Karin and Adrian.

There are two rock painting sites on the property. A noticeboard on the main road from Piketberg to Aurora and Velddrif advertises the fact that paintings can be seen on the farm and a smaller noticeboard near the first of the two painted sites is set up alongside the road from Banghoek to Redelinghuys and Elands Bay. Access to both sites is easy with no climbing involved.

The first site is a small overhang 2 x 2 m with a number of very clear paintings in two panels, one 200 x 750 mm and the other 100 x 250 mm. The larger panel comprises 17 human figures (men where it is possible to differentiate), 15 indeterminate antelope, 3 possible sheep, 2 'palettes', 1 set of filled in triangles in a row and a large 'W'. All the paintings are in red and some of the clearer antelope have been outlined in a darker paint. The smaller panel has 1 antelope with four horns and 2 humans in a dark maroon. The human figures have their hands on their hips and could depict Europeans. The rock surface is hard and dense and although some of the paintings have faded and the rock surface has flaked in places, they are in reasonably good condition. To the left of the smaller panel is a scratched graffito with a 'star' and a comet-like tail.

The second site is a large rock with a flat north-facing surface about 13 m long and 3,25 m high and a narrower overhanging section that has served to protect the paintings. The painted section is about 400 x 1400 mm with 7 indeterminate antelope, 1 clearly human figure and possibly two others, and 1 'palette', all in faded red. The surface of the rock is not stable and the top weathered layer is flaking off in a number of places.

The management proposals for the rock art on Banghoek draw on the principle that the less attention that is drawn to them, the longer the paintings are likely to last. Unless

the first site is upgraded with a guide on-site at peak visiting times, it should remain a place known only to the residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The noticeboard alongside the road to Redelinghuys indicating the path to the paintings at the first site should be moved off the roadside so that casual passers-by (who are more likely to do damage) will not be tempted to visit them on a casual basis.
2. A noticeboard may be placed at or near the first site to inform visitors how the paintings should and should not be treated. The NMC will draw up the wording and assist with the cost.
3. Both sites should be checked regularly to see that the paintings are not being damaged.
4. The second site should not be advertised at all as an attraction for visitors. The paintings here are at great risk. When the plot is sold, the purchaser should be informed that no buildings may be erected around the rock outcrop and no changes should be made to the vegetation immediately in front of the paintings.

Janette Deacon
1 October 1990

NATIONAL MONUMENTS COUNCIL
RAAD VIR NASIONALE GEDENKWAARDIGHEDE

CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION OF ROCK PAINTINGS AT BANGHOEK
FILE NO. 9/2/072/3
TO: Mrs Pat Riley
DATE: 17 August 1990
FROM: Dr J Deacon

The application for the rezoning of Banghoek Farm, Piketberg, refers.

Rock paintings are known on the property and they are marked on the route map for visitors. All rock paintings are protected in terms of the National Monuments Act (Act No. 28 of 1969, as amended) and anyone found damaging them is liable for prosecution. There is no known way to preserve rock paintings and research on the subject has been conducted world-wide without a suitable solution having been found. It has been conclusively demonstrated that the single most damaging factor is the action of people who touch, rub, wet and scribble over the paintings, make fires in the rock shelters or attempt to chop paintings off the rocks. The only known antidote is to keep people away from them, or to limit access strictly to those visitors who are accompanied by a trained guide. Educational aids such as noticeboards and pamphlets help, but are not foolproof. Once a rock painting is damaged or desecrated, there is nothing that will bring it back. It is literally gone forever. It is the responsibility of the National Monuments Council to see that this does not happen in the case of Banghoek.

The National Monuments Council is not against the opening of rock art sites to the public, but it must be done with the greatest care and under professional guidance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The developers of Banghoek should commission a survey of the rock paintings on the property to identify and record what is there. This could be done by the archaeology contracts office at the universities of Cape Town or Stellenbosch or through the NMC.
2. The NMC would then draw up management proposals for the rock art and identify which sites may be used for visitors and which should not. The NMC would also monitor the sites from time to time to check on vandalism and natural deterioration.
3. Information boards must be erected in consultation with the NMC to indicate to visitors where to go to see rock paintings, how they should be treated, and what they may mean.
4. If any of the rock painting sites is of particular importance, it may be necessary to appoint a guide or site guardian.