



WHAT THE LANDSCAPE TELLS US

The landscape demonstrates the intentions and views of those who settled here. During the 1700s, the Dutch East India Company planted Stone Pine trees extensively throughout the Peninsula. These included the Stone Pines that are planted on the slopes of Devil's Peak. They were planted due to their favourable adaptations to the Cape Mediterranean climate, to create what was regarded in the European tradition as an aesthetically pleasing landscape and to enclose significant spaces. When Rhodes arrived in this area in the late 1800s, he cleared most of the indigenous vegetation to create a parkland effect and grazing land for animals. Some land was used for agriculture and wood collection. Some indigenous forest and scrub vegetation has survived in localized patches and we see re-colonization of previously cultivated land by scrub species. However, many factors inhibit the full re-establishment of indigenous vegetation.



FURTHER READING

- Combrink, P. et al. 1992. *Grooten Schuur Estate – Landscape Management Plan. Appendices*. Department of Public Works & Land Affairs, Cape Town.
- De Villiers, C.N. 2000. *Grooten Schuur Estate. Conservation and Development Framework. Phase 1: Analysis and Preliminary Recommendations*. Prepared for CPNP, Cape Town.
- Cape Town South Africa. 1991. *Grooten Schuur Zoo Site Redevelopment Proposal*. Government Printers, South Africa.
- *The Cape Odyssey. A Journey into the Colourful and Fascinating History of the Cape*. Vol. 2, Issue 2.

Cape Peninsula  National Park

P.O. Box 37, Constantia, 7848
Tel: +27 21 701 8692 or Fax: +27 21 701 8773
e-mail: capepeninsula@parks-sa.co.za
website: <http://www.cnpn.co.za>

Emergency: Tel: +27 21 957-4700
(Belville Control) all hours

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BRIGHT BROWN design



HISTORY



GROOTE SCHUUR ESTATE



Cape Peninsula National Park
— A park for all, forever —



THE GROOTE SCHUUR ESTATE

South African National Parks protects natural and associated cultural heritage, to the pride and joy of all South Africans. The Groote Schuur Estate is an area of rich cultural heritage, situated in the Northern section of the Cape Peninsula National Park (CPNP), on the eastern slopes of Devil's Peak and Mowbray Ridge. The Lower estates (Mostert's Mill, Welgelegen and Groote Schuur residence), although part of the original Estate, are not managed by the CPNP. A hundred years ago Cecil John Rhodes started a far-sighted programme of land consolidation and protection on the mountain slopes. Today, a rich legacy is being protected and developed for the enjoyment of all South Africans and visitors, hopefully for generations to come.

THREE NODES OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

RHODES MEMORIAL

Rhodes Memorial and the cottage where a tea garden is housed today, were built between 1910 and 1912 by Sir Herbert Baker (designer and architect) and are densely enclosed by Stone Pine trees. Baker built the Memorial after Rhodes' death, modelling it after the Greek Temple at Segesta. The Memorial marked Rhodes' favourite spot where he would sit for hours. He declared the view to be unsurpassed anywhere in the world.



ZOO SITE

On the slopes just above the land presently occupied by the University of Cape Town, a cage like structure was built in 1897 to house lions, opposite the tarred access road. In 1930 this structure was demolished and replaced by a new lion enclosure which was known as Groote Schuur Zoo. It has been vacant since 1975. It is believed that Rhodes had a fondness for the lion as 'King of Beasts' and symbolising the dreams and aspirations of the British Empire. A mixture of well-established indigenous and exotic trees that could be well beyond 60 years old surrounds this site.

WHAT HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS TOOK PLACE HERE?

1600s	Khoi pastoralists on eastern slopes of Table Mountain
1667	Dutch East India Company (DEIC) built De Groote Schuur ('Big Barn')
1700s	Stone Pines planted extensively on Table Mountain Slopes
1870	Cecil John Rhodes arrived in South Africa
1891-99	Rhodes purchased properties on eastern slopes of Table Mountain
1893	Rhodes purchased Groote Schuur residence
1897	Cage like structure to house lions constructed on upper slopes of Estate
1910	Passing of the Rhodes Will (Groote Schuur Devolution Act 9/19100)
1910	SA Government put the DPW in charge of the Estate
1911	Construction of University of Cape Town
1912	Rhodes Memorial constructed
1930	Old lion house demolished
1931	Construction of new lion enclosure and Groote Schuur Zoo
1975	Groote Schuur Zoo closed
1985	Amendment to Rhodes Will. Groote Schuur Zoo Site (13ha) transformed into 'a park for the people' but only for white South Africans
1999	Groote Schuur Estate incorporated into CPNP, with the aim of managing and making it accessible to all South Africans.

MOUNT PLEASANT

The Mount Pleasant Complex has some level of historical significance due to the age and design of clad stones buildings and physical evidence of modified landscape. Existing buildings were probably built in the 20th century. It was incorrectly believed that money was buried in the property and people used to dig huge holes in expectation of reaping a rich harvest. The property was used for agriculture since 1802. A history of vegetable cultivation has left its traces in terraces and water furrows. Mount Pleasant buildings have been restored into a new administration block for the Northern Section of the CPNP.

RECREATIONAL AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

- Gateway – The Estate serves as a gateway to Table Mountain, The Back Table, Newlands forest, Kirstenbosch and Cecilia Forest.
- Recreation – The three nodes on the Estate are available for recreation such as hiking, picnicking, jogging and mountain biking. The CPNP manages the impact through visitor management practices and regulations.
- Outstanding view – The landscape and existing infrastructure in the Estate allow the visitor to view Cape Town from Table Bay across the Cape Flats to the Hottentots Holland Mountains.
- Outdoor education – the footpaths and jeep tracks, up to the upper slopes of the mountain (King's Blockhouse), are used as interpretative trails for school children and other visitors.

The Estate is a reminder of the power, purpose and the vision of Cecil John Rhodes. His goal was to prevent the encroachment of suburban development up these mountain slopes and to secure the land as a national asset for future generations.